

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 293, VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance Act. I believe that a high-performing organization needs to have clear qualifications and metrics by which they can measure success. Without them, organizations lose their way.

That is why I am proud to have, once again, introduced the VA Hospital Establishing Leadership Performance Act. My bill would require VA to establish standardized qualifications and performance metrics for each human resource position within the Veterans Health Administration.

A few years ago, the committee found that certain HR professionals working in the VA healthcare system did not have the proper education or experience for the jobs that they held.

For example, one HR director at a medical center lacked both a college degree and relevant work experience when hired for the job. This bill would make sure that that does not happen again by requiring HR staff to be qualified and equipped to handle VA's complex human resources needs.

During the 115th Congress, this bill passed the House by a vote of 417-0. I hope that it, again, gains that type of support with this entire Chamber.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support my bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I have no further questions, and I am prepared to close.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 293, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 293.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

#### SOLE LIABILITY FOR TRANSFERRED EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BY AN INDIVIDUAL WHO FAILS TO COMPLETE A SERVICE AGREEMENT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 290) to amend title 38, United

States Code, to render an individual, who transfers certain educational assistance, to which the individual is entitled because of an agreement by such individual to serve in the Armed Forces, to a dependent of that individual, and who fails to complete such agreement, solely liable for the overpayment of such educational assistance, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 290

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SOLE LIABILITY FOR TRANSFERRED EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BY AN INDIVIDUAL WHO FAILS TO COMPLETE A SERVICE AGREEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (i) of section 3319 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “In the event” and inserting “Subject to paragraph (2), in the event”; and

(B) by inserting “of this title” after “section 3685”;

(2) in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2)—

(A) in the heading, by striking “IN GENERAL” and inserting “SOLE LIABILITY”; and

(B) by inserting “for which the individual shall be solely liable to the United States for the amount of the overpayment for purposes of section 3685 of this title” before the period at the end; and

(3) in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking “Subparagraph (A) shall not apply” and inserting “Neither the individual nor the dependent shall be liable to the United States for the amount of the overpayment for purposes of section 3685 of this title”; and

(B) in clause (ii), by inserting “of this title” after “section 3311(c)(4)”.

(b) REVERSION.—Effective October 1, 2024, such subsection (i) is amended to read as it read on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

#### SEC. 2. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 290, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the eligibility for veterans to transfer their earned educational benefits is limited based on service time and commitments to additional service time. Recently, there have been a number of cases where DOD erroneously calculated servicemembers' time in service, allowing the servicemember to transfer a benefit when they should not have, as in the case of Russell Dotson.

In Mr. Dotson's case, he was told by the Navy that he was able to transfer his benefit to his daughter. Unfortunately, the Navy was 6 days off in its calculation. That led to his daughter's GI Bill-covered tuition at DePaul University being cut off. Now, she and her father, a veteran who served 22 years and was honored for saving two lives in Afghanistan, are left having to repay more than \$20,000.

As a result of these errors, the veteran and their dependent are saddled with a huge bill, that is overpayment, for the cost of erroneously billed educational costs. The debt levied on the dependent is costly and can ruin their credit before they enter the labor force, which could impact their housing and job opportunities.

H.R. 290, as amended, limits liabilities to ensure that there aren't surprise debts created by errors in paperwork. This legislation has been supported by VSOs such as the VFW, American Legion, and the Student Veterans of America.

Madam Speaker, I thank Ranking Member BOST for his work on this issue. I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 290, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 290, as amended, to create a sole liability for GI Bill payments during transfer in certain cases. This bill would hold a servicemember liable should they transfer the GI Bill entitlement but fail to complete their service obligation.

The GI Bill is a fantastic benefit. The GI Bill has helped tens of thousands of veterans and their families obtain a higher education. Some servicemembers are eligible to transfer their GI Bill entitlement to a dependent. They can do this once they have completed 6 years of active service and agree to serve an additional 4 years.

Under my bill, if the servicemember begins to transfer the entitlement at the 6-year mark but fails to complete the additional 4 years of the required service, their dependent would not be held liable for overpayments. This would help dependents avoid unexpected VA debt for actions outside of their control. Some overpayments can total hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is only right that we ensure that they are assigned to the right person.

Madam Speaker, I thank our VSO partners, especially those at the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors for bringing this issue to my attention.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I just want to encourage all of my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 290, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 290, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1500

## HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3642) to award a Congressional gold medal to the 369th Infantry Regiment, commonly known as the "Harlem Hellfighters", in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service during World War I, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3642

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Harlem Hellfighters Congressional Gold Medal Act".

### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) When the United States officially entered World War I in April 1917, the Armed Forces were still segregated, even though African-American soldiers had served and distinguished themselves in every war since the Revolutionary War, and even the Colonial Wars preceding the American Revolution.

(2) After several years of advocacy and debate, in 1916 the State of New York authorized the recruitment of the 15th New York National Guard Regiment, which was called to Federal service on July 25, 1917, soon after arriving for training at Camp Whitman, New York.

(3) The 15th completed its basic military practice training at Camp Whitman, New York.

(4) To receive combat training, the 15th reported, on October 8, 1917, to Camp Wadsworth, in Spartanburg, South Carolina, where it experienced many incidents of racial discrimination.

(5) Consequently, the government agreed to remove the 15th from Camp Wadsworth, but, instead of receiving further training, the regiment began preparing for deployment to France in November.

(6) The 15th arrived in Saint Nazaire, France, on January 1, 1918, where it was redesignated the 369th Infantry Regiment

(7) Partly because many White soldiers within the American Expeditionary Forces (hereinafter, the "AEF") refused to perform combat duty with Black soldiers, members of the 369th were initially assigned manual labor tasks, such as loading and unloading supplies, and constructing roads and railroads.

(8) After receiving pressure from the 369th regimental commander about not having a combat mission, the AEF attached the 369th to the French Fourth Army.

(9) By mid-March of 1918, the 369th went to the Argonne Forest with the French 16th Division for training and soon entered the trenches.

(10) The 369th encountered its first German soldiers in combat in April, 1918.

(11) In May of 1918, Private Henry Johnson of the 369th received the French Croix de Guerre, with Palm, for extraordinary valor, becoming one of the first American soldiers to be awarded this honor.

(12) Johnson also belatedly received a Purple Heart, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and in, 2015, was awarded the Medal of Honor.

(13) Throughout the remainder of the spring and into the summer the 369th served at Minacourt, in the Champagne-Marne Defensive, and during the Aisne-Marne Offensive in support of the French 161st Infantry Division.

(14) As summer turned to autumn, the 369th went on to participate in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, where it captured the important village of Sechault despite sustaining severe losses.

(15) On October 14, 1918, the 369th advanced to Alsace.

(16) On November 20, 1918, the 369th reached the banks of the Rhine River as part of the French Army of Occupation, the first Allied unit to do so.

(17) The 369th was relieved of its assignment with the French 161st Division in December, 1918, and elements of the regiment sailed for New York in late January and early February, 1919.

(18) The 369th Infantry Regiment received a parade up 5th Avenue in New York City on February 17, 1919, receiving applause and cheers from hundreds of thousands of onlookers.

(19) The 369th was demobilized on February 28, 1919.

(20) Over 170 individual members of the 369th received the Croix de Guerre, many were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and the 369th was awarded a unit citation.

(21) It is generally believed that the 369th was dubbed the "Harlem Hellfighters" by German soldiers, who found the men to be incredibly determined and courageous in battle.

(22) The 369th was the first regiment of African Americans to deploy overseas during World War I and spent 191 days on the front line in World War I, more than any other American regimental sized unit.

(23) The 369th never lost a foot of ground nor had a man taken prisoner, despite suffering a high number of casualties.

### SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to the 369th Infantry Regiment, commonly known as the "Harlem Hellfighters", in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service during World War I.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury shall

strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the 369th Infantry Regiment, the "Harlem Hellfighters", the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it will be displayed as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal awarded pursuant to this Act available for display elsewhere, particularly at other locations associated with the Harlem Hellfighters.

### SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the bronze medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALES.—The amounts received from the sale of duplicate medals under subsection (a) shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

(c) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under this Act.

### SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

The gold medal struck pursuant to this Act is a national medal for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

### SEC. 6. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the soldiers of the 369th Infantry Regiment were known to both their enemies and allies alike for their fierceness in battle and dedication to their country. They were called the Black Rattlers, the Men of Bronze, and Hollenkampfer, but they were best known as the Harlem Hellfighters.

The Harlem Hellfighters were one of the first African-American regiments